



Sufra NW London

Whistleblowing Policy

Procedure Owner:	Deputy Director	To be approved by:	Board of Trustees
Last reviewed by owner on:	May 2025	Approved on:	23 September 2025
Next Review Date:	May 2027	Review frequency:	2 years

1 Introduction

Sufra NW London is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and highest possible ethical standards in public life and in all its practices. To achieve these ends it encourages its staff, volunteers, trustees and users to tell us when we get things right or wrong so we can continuously improve. The charity also encourages staff, volunteers, and trustees to use internal mechanisms for reporting any malpractice or illegal acts or omissions at the earliest opportunity, without fear.

The term 'employee' is used henceforth to mean both paid employee and volunteer.

2 Definition and Examples

'Whistleblowing' is the act of reporting certain types of wrongdoing. This will usually be something you have seen at work – though not always. The wrongdoing disclosed must be in the public interest. This means it must affect others, e.g. the general public, Sufra NW London staff, volunteers, guests and other stakeholders. You can raise your concern at any time about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now, or you believe will happen in the near future.

Example of wrongdoings about which an employee would 'blow the whistle' might be:

- A child or vulnerable adult is being put at risk;
- A criminal offence, e.g. fraud;

- Someone's health and safety is in danger;
- A miscarriage of justice; and/or
- You believe someone is covering up wrongdoing.

Personal grievances aren't covered by this policy, unless your particular case is in the public interest. Refer to the Grievance Policy if appropriate.

It should be emphasised that this policy is intended to assist individuals who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety. It is not designed to question financial or business decisions taken by the charity, nor should it be used to reconsider any matters which have already been addressed under the Bullying and Harassment, Complaints, Grievance, Disciplinary, or other policies.

Once the whistleblowing procedures are in place, it is reasonable to expect staff to use them rather than air their complaints outside the charity.

3 Safeguards

3.1 Protection

This policy is designed to offer protection to those employees of the charity who disclose such concerns provided the disclosure is made in the reasonable belief of the individual making the disclosure that it tends to show malpractice or impropriety.

It is important to note that no protection from internal disciplinary procedures is offered to those who choose not to use the procedure. In an extreme case malicious or wild allegations could give rise to legal action on the part of the persons complained about.

Sufra NW London will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a legitimate concern.

3.2 Confidentiality

The charity will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information, and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

3.3 Anonymity

This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make.

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible, but they may be considered at the discretion of the charity.

In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised;
- The credibility of the concern; and/or
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

3.4 Untrue allegations

If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual. In making a disclosure, the individual should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information. If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, and particularly if he or she persists with making them, disciplinary action may be taken against that individual.

4 Disclosure procedure

Any concerns falling within the scope of this policy should be raised orally, or preferably in writing, giving the history of the concern, as much detail as possible (including all relevant dates, names, and places where appropriate) about the issue, and outlining any particular concerns about the situation.

In the first instance, whistleblowers will ideally feel they are able to raise the concern with their line manager. If a whistleblower feels unable to do this the concern should be raised with the next person in the chain of management. If the complaint concerns the Chair of the Board of Trustees, it should be raised with another member of the Board.

If the disclosure is made orally, then the line manager will make a record of the disclosure.

Within 5 working days of making a disclosure, the whistleblower will receive in writing an acknowledgement that their concerns have been received and an indication as to how the charity will proceed.

5 Investigation procedure

The concern will be thoroughly investigated as quickly as is reasonably possible by an appropriate person.

Full details and clarifications of the complaint should be obtained by the member of staff investigating the complaint, the investigating officer. After an initial review of the situation and where appropriate, the investigating officer should inform the member of staff against whom the complaint is made as soon as is practically possible.

A preliminary assessment update will be provided to the complainant within 15 days of the whistleblow being made, this update should let them know of next steps, ie if no action is taken, if the issue is being referred to another process (grievance or safeguard) or if a full investigation will take place and a preliminary timeline will be provided. Depending on the complexity of the case, an investigation outcome could take anywhere between 2 weeks and 3 months.

The allegations should be fully investigated by the investigating officer with the assistance, where appropriate, of other individuals/bodies.

A judgement concerning the complaint and validity of the complaint will be made by the investigating officer. This judgement will be detailed in a written report containing the findings of the investigations and reasons for the judgement.

The investigating officer will decide what action to take. If the complaint is shown to be justified, they will invoke disciplinary or other appropriate company procedures.

Whistleblowers will be kept informed of the progress of their complaints.

The outcome of the investigation will be confirmed in writing as soon as is reasonably possible, however the detail of the action to be taken may not be appropriate to divulge e.g. pending criminal investigations or confidentiality issues.

All investigations which are confirmed by subsequent investigation will be reported to the Board of Trustees.

Sufra NW London will ensure that the whistleblower has appropriate support during and after the investigation.

[END]

Revised 4 June 2025

Reviewed 09 May 2023

Revised on 10 September 2019